

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 07566 151008Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----070426 151014Z /20

O 150918Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3637
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 5755
USMISSION SINAI
DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 7566

EXDIS -- MILITARY ADDEES TREAT AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, MARR, IS, LE, PLO
SUBJECT: PULLOUT - WHAT NEXT?

REF: (A) USDAO TEL AVIV IIR 6 849 0516 78, (B) USDAO TEL AVIV
IIR 6 849 0510 78; (C) TEL AVIV 7516

1. THE IDF WITHDREW FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON ON JUNE 13 (REF A), 91 DAYS

AFTER ITS INCURSION. NONETHELESS THE SITUATION THERE REMAINS CONFUSED

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AND VOLATILE.

2. THE DE FACTO SITUATION NOW REIGNING IN SOUTH LEBANON BEARS
MORE RESEMBLANCE TO SHTAURA PHASE III THAN TO THE OBJECTIVES
OF UN RESOLUTION 425. AS A RESULT OF THE ISRAELI OPERATION,
THE PALESTINIAN ARMED PRESENCE HAS BEEN ELIMINATED IN THE
10 KM STRIP ALONG THE BORDER. THIS AREA IS NOW OCCUPIED BY

THE FORCES OF HADDAD AND SHIDIAK, ALLIES OF THE ISRAELIS, WHO MAY (DEPENDING UPON ONE'S INTERPRETATION) BE PART OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. AT PRESENT UNIFIL APPEARS TO BE MORE A UNTSO OBSERVER MISSION IN THIS AREA RATHER THAN A FORCE INTRODUCED TO ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON IN ENSURING THE RETURN OF ITS EFFECTIVE AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT SOUTH LEBANON. IN THE PROCESS OF WITHDRAWAL, THE ISRAELIS MADE HADDAD THE DE FACTO LEBANESE AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH. BY THE FORMALITY OF THE TURNOVER OF VILLAGES AND STRONGPOINTS TO THE CHRISTIANS, WHICH INCLUDED PARADES AND LEBANESE FLAG RAISINGS AS THE STAR OF DAVID CAME DOWN - DESCRIBED BY AT LEAST ONE REPORTER AS A "CECIL B. DEMILLE" EVENT - HADDAD HAS HAD HIS CLAIM OF BEING THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE REAFFIRMED IN HIS EYES AND THOSE OF ISRAEL, DESPITE THE VIEW OF BEIRUT AND GENERAL ERSKINE.

3. IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT HADDAD WILL NOT ALLOW UNARMED PALESTINIANS TO RETURN TO THE TURF THE CHRISTIANS NOW HOLD, AS UNIFIL APPEARS TO PERMIT FURTHER NORTH. HADDAD AND COMPANY WILL RESIST ANY SUCH MOVES AND WE ANTICIPATE HE WILL SHOT FIRST AND CHECK FOR ARMS LATER. HE WILL NOT ALLOW A UNIFIL PRESENCE TO DETER HIS RESISTANCE TO INFILTRATION.

4. IF GEN. ERSKINE ATTEMPTS TO PUSH UNIFIL'S AUTHORITY IN THE ENCLAVES, THE CHANCES OF UNIFIL-CHRISTIAN CONFRONTATION ARE CONSIDERABLE -- AND IT WON'T BE A PLEASANT ONE. IF
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THE UN CAN'T HANDLE THE PROBLEM AND REQUESTS US TO ASK THE ISRAELIS TO INTERCEDE WITH HADDAD, WE CAN EXPECT A REBUFF ALONG THE LINE: "YOU TOLD US TO HURRY UP AND GET OUT - WE DID. THE UN AND THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO SORT IT OUT."

5. THE IDF WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY DESPITE THEIR NOT BEING ON THE GROUND ITSELF. WE ALREADY HAVE SOME YET UNCONFIRMED INFORMATION (REF B) THAT ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL CARRIERS (US WWII VINTAGE) HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED TO THE CHRISTIANS. IT IS ALSO ASSUMED THAT AMMUNITION STOCKS (MANUFACTURED IN ISRAEL) WERE LEFT IN THE STRONGPOINTS AND CAN BE REPLENISHED. COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN HADDAD AND THE IDF HAVE ALWAYS BEEN GOOD AND ARE NOW BETTER. IF HADDAD AND COMPANY GET INTO MORE TROUBLE WITH THE PALESTINIANS THAN THEY CAN HANDLE, THE GOI HAS RESTATED ITS COMMITMENT TO PROTECT THE CHRISTIANS AND THE 35TH PARA BDE (REF A) IS IN PLACE TO BE COMMITTED IF NECESSARY. ARTILLERY AND AIR SUPPORT ARE NOT FAR AWAY. ONE ADDITIONAL AND IMPORTANT FACTOR IS THE ATTITUDE OF CHIEF OF STAFF EITAN - HE IS SWORN TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE CHRISTIANS AND IS VIEWED BY THEM AS THEIR PROTECTOR. HE

WILL NOT HESITATE TO FORCEFULLY RECOMMEND THE INTRODUCTION
OF IDF TROOP SUPPORT TO THE CHRISTIANS IF THEY APPEAR TO
BE ENDANGERED.

6. IN SUMMARY, THE CLOUDS OF DISTRUST AND LACK OF REASON
CONTINUE TO HANG HEAVY. WE BELIEVE THAT THE INITIAL UN
APPROACH IS THE CORRECT ONE - TRY TO MOLLIFY BOTH HADDAD
AND THE GOL AND KEEP A LOW PROFILE IN THE ENCLAVES WHILE
HOPEFULLY AWAITING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOL AND HADDAD.
IN THE MEANTIME, THE PALESTINIANS HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO
COMPLICATE THE SITUATION FURTHER AS THE LEBANESE ARMY,
CHRISTIANS, UNIFIL AND THE GOI TRY TO WORK THE EXISTING
CONFUSION AND NEW RELATIONSHIPS OUT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV07566
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780250-0081
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780653/aaaabufb.tel
Line Count: 136
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c33fe287-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2332402
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PULLOUT - WHAT NEXT?
TAGS: MOPS, MARR, PINR, IS, LE, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c33fe287-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014